Together and Alive

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Together and Alive by bucharestbuck

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Summary:

On the anniversary of the death of It, the Losers always get together to comfort one another and help one another forget the past. But, this year with everyone else unable to gather, Eddie and Richie get together. However, a normal evening changes suddenly when a clap of thunder triggers memories for Richie.

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Rain beat against the window panes, the droplets illuminated by the flitting images on the television. Both boys sat in silence, regarding the show with little interest. This night every year for the past four years had been filled with laughter and comfort and sometimes even tears. However, this year, only two boys remained. A few had ended up moving. Now that college was on the horizon, a couple had committed and moved on. One was dead. But two remained. So the two of them got together on the anniversary of the death of their childhood demon just so they wouldn't be alone.

The screen flickered again, the reception going in and out because of the storm. Richie got up and plodded over to the box, moving the bunny ears to and fro attempting to regain a decent picture. Eddie watched him with a vague interest. Richie had shot up height wise in the almost five years since the group had fought It. His hair was just as shaggy and his glasses lenses just as thick. He had grown into his new body with an ease old Richie didn't possess. He was comfortable with his lanky limbs and towering frame.

Eddie on the other hand hadn’t grown too much. He was solid, neither too muscled nor too skinny. His hair had grown out a little and didn't lay as perfectly as it used too. Maybe it had something to do with no longer being under his mother’s thumb at all.

Once Richie found a picture he was satisfied with, he returned to the couch, flopping backward onto it with a sigh. “So what do you wanna do Eddie?” he asked.

Eddie turned toward Richie and found himself face to face with him. They were much closer now than they had been before Richie had gotten up to adjust the tv antennas.

“I don't know,” Eddie replied with a shrug.

Both boys looked at each other for another minute before sinking back into their previous positions, blindly watching some children's program.

A bright flash of lightning struck down and a loud crash of thunder sounded with a sudden, startling force. Eddie may have shrieked in a voice that he hadn't had since before puberty really hit him, but he would not admit to it. With a jump, Eddie had ended up with his face hidden in Richie's shoulder, clutching the other boy's shirt in his fists.

After a beat's pause, Eddie regained his composure with a shaky breath. Pulling away from Richie, he could bring himself to look into his eyes, knowing he'd find a mocking smirk. And what Richie didn't know allowed him to still have some of his childlike tendencies he retained even after the ordeal with It, so Eddie tried to calm his rapidly beating heart. Hopefully a panic attack wouldn't set in and Eddie wouldn't be forced to explain that ever since It, he would occasionally forget how to breath and the walls would close in on him.

Once Eddie finally felt up to turning back to Richie, the sight before him chilled him to the bone. Richie sat rigidly still, fingers clenched so hard his knuckles were white. His face was as pale as his knuckles, eyes wide.

Taken aback by what he saw, Eddie could only stare as his friend's body began to shake slightly. Tentatively, Eddie reached out and took one of Richie's fists in his hands. As gently as he could, he worked Richie's fingers loose. He saw that Richie's nails had bit so far into the flesh of his palms that blood welled up and slid its way down his palm and onto his wrist.

"Richie," Eddie called. "Richie you're bleeding."

At the sound of Eddie's voice, Richie snapped his head in the direction of the sound, eyes wild and lost in some other world. Richie ripped his hand from Eddie's grip, backing up as quickly as he could form the other boy. He moved jerkily, like he wasn't fully in control of his body. Richie flung himself from the couch onto the floor with a loud thud. His breathing sounded ragged and strained as he continued backing away from Eddie, eyes never straying from Eddie's.

Eddie watched transfixed as his obnoxious, outgoing best friend cowered silently in fear with his back against the wall.

As easily as he could, Eddie lowered himself onto the floor, attempting to get on the same level as Richie. Slowly, Eddie began to scoot toward Richie, all the while talking to him in soft, hopefully calming tones.

“Richie, it's me Eddie. I'm your friend remember. We're hanging out and I'm spending the night. We were watching a shitty television show.”

With the distance lessening, Richie began to whimper, as though a creature straight out of his nightmares was closing in on him. Eddie halted his movements. He was close enough to touch Richie now, but he wasn't going to make this any worse by touching him without his permission.

“Richie can you hear me? It's Eddie. Remember me?” Eddie tried again. The frightened eyes remained glued to Eddie, nothing seeming to change.

“We fought It together. Do you remember? When I fell and broke my arm and he was right in front of me, you yelled at me. You told me to look at you. To keep my eyes on you. You were going to be the last thing I ever saw Richie,” Eddie pleaded. “Please Richie, see me now. See me!”

Eddie's voice had risen to almost a scream and tears filled his eyes. Suddenly, the look on Richie's face and behind his eyes seemed to shift. The rigidity of his back loosened, his shoulders slumping and his head sagging. His eyes blinked several times before he shakily said, “Eddie?”

Eddie exhaled sharply, the adrenaline from the situation seeming to suddenly drain from his body as though the stopper holding it inside him had been removed. “Can I touch you?” Eddie asked quietly.

With a slight nod, Eddie closed the remaining distance between them and pulled Richie into his arms. Richie rested his head tiredly on Eddie’s shoulder.

A shuddering breath escaped Richie before he began to say, “I saw It. The thunder. It threw me back and his face was on your body and he

was going to kill me and I–" but he wasn't able to finish his sentence because heaving sobs wracked his frame. His body shook against Eddie's for sometime, tears soaking Eddie's shirt. And his sobs slowly turned into little hiccups as he ran out of tears.

All the while, Eddie held him and rubbed soothing circles on his back and arms, and talked softly to him. Once all of the tears seemed to have finally left Richie's body and his hiccups subsided to sniffles and finally to silence, Eddie said, "Rich, I need to clean up your hands, and then we'll go to bed ok?"

Richie nodded softly against Eddie's shoulder. Gently, Eddie helped Richie stand and lead him to the bathroom down the hall, hand in hand. Eddie had Richie sit on the toilet lid while he bustled around the room collecting the things he needed. Richie sat motionless, unable to find the energy to talk or do much of anything.

Once he had all of his supplies, Eddie knelt before Richie, softly taking Richie's hand in his. He whipped the blood from his palm and wrist with a damp rag. Even when he poured the alcohol on the four crescents marring the smooth skin of Richie's hand, it garnered no reaction. Wiping up the alcohol, Eddie wrapped a little bit of gauze around each of Richie's hand. Then he returned the supplies to where he had found them strewn about the bathroom.

Eddie returned to Richie, taking his wrist in hand and pulling Richie up from his seat. He slowly lead them both to Richie's bedroom. He sat Richie once more on his bed and went to the messy dresser draws to grab a pair of sleep pants and a shirt. Normally, helping his friend change would have been weird and Richie would have poked fun in a very Richie fashion, yet he now sat motionless, unseeing. His limbs moved in accordance to what Eddie asked for, never more or less.

Once Richie was dressed, Eddie quickly changed himself and returned to Richie's side. Pushing Richie backward, Eddie tucked him.

As Eddie turned to walk across the room to his sleeping bag and to turn off the lights, Richie grabbed Eddie's wrist. When Eddie turned back, he saw the look on Richie's face and knew he still needed him. So, Eddie nodded his head, quickly went to turn off the lights and returned to Richie's bed. Richie scooted to one side, making room for

Eddie.

Eddie slipped into the bed, scooting closer to Richie and pulling him against him. Both boys laid tangled in each other's arms until they fell asleep just breathing and reveling in the fact they were both still alive and together in each other's embrace.

Author's Note:

> This was written for @demolitionbucky. My tumblr is @bucharestbuck. My inbox is always open for prompts or requests.